

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today secured approval from the U.S. House of a \$4.3 million increase in funding for two critical federal programs that support the Susquehanna Flood Forecast and Warning System (SFFWS). The funding increase will boost the efforts of the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) National Streamflow Information Program and The Cooperative Water Program. Both programs offer support to the SFFWS network of rain and stream gages by offsetting operation and maintenance costs of the network. Hinchey used his position as a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Environment, which oversees funding for the USGS, to secure the funding increase. The U.S. Senate is expected to approve the funding increases later today.

"The Southern Tier just experienced record flooding and residents of the area understand how critical it is to have stream and river gauges in place that can provide early information on rising water levels," said Hinchey. "Without the right gauges, the National Weather Service and other agencies would be unable to predict when floodwaters would crest, putting huge amounts of property and lives at risk. Families who continue to recover from the devastating effects of this year's flooding need to have as much notice as possible for future floods. I'm glad I was able to secure final passage of this provision, and I'm going to continue working to ensure that Southern Tier families get as much protection as possible from future floods."

The SFFWS is designed to help save lives and lessen property damage by providing early warning information about impending floods. Federal support for the program has been in jeopardy as a result of the ban on earmarks. Last year, funding that was targeted to the warning system was eliminated when Senate Republicans filibustered a larger federal budget bill. The program was further put in jeopardy as a result of the budget cuts in a continuing resolution, which Hinchey opposed. Since that time, Hinchey has worked to restore funding for the critical program.